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AREA 88

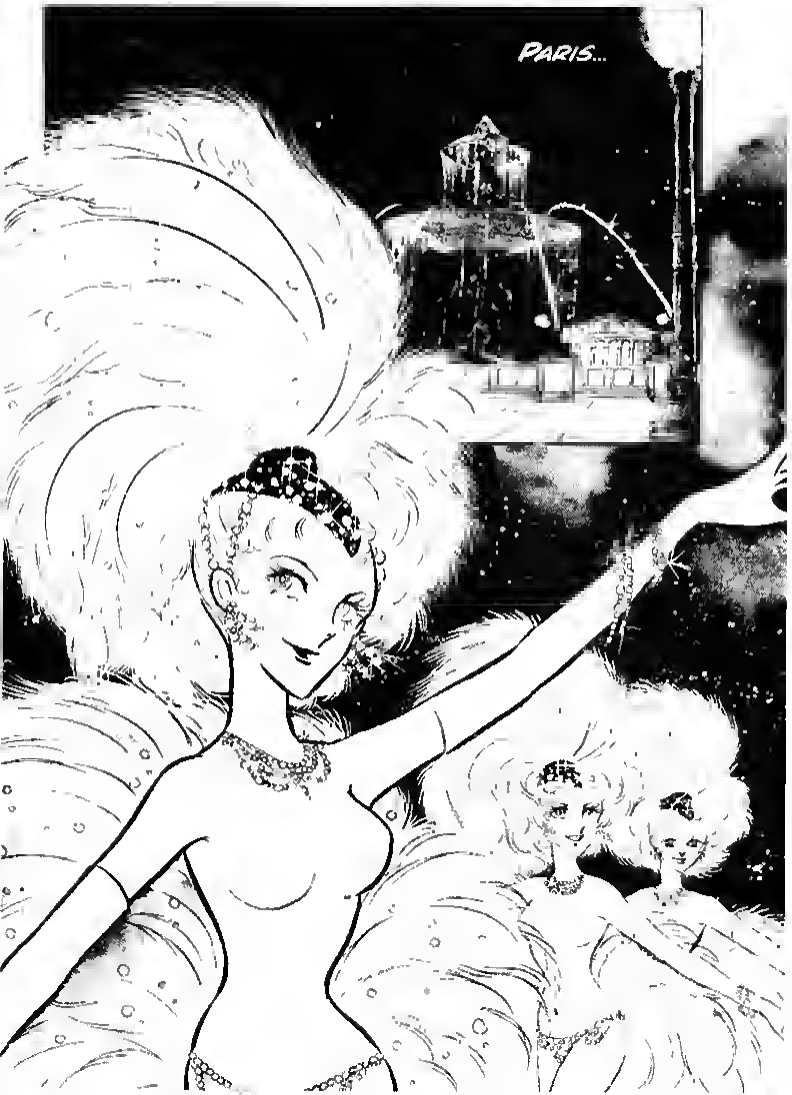
by KAORU SHINTANI

16

BIWEEKLY

What Possible Link
Could There Be
Between Shin and Mick
And An International
Terrorist Plot?

VIZ COMICS


PARIS...

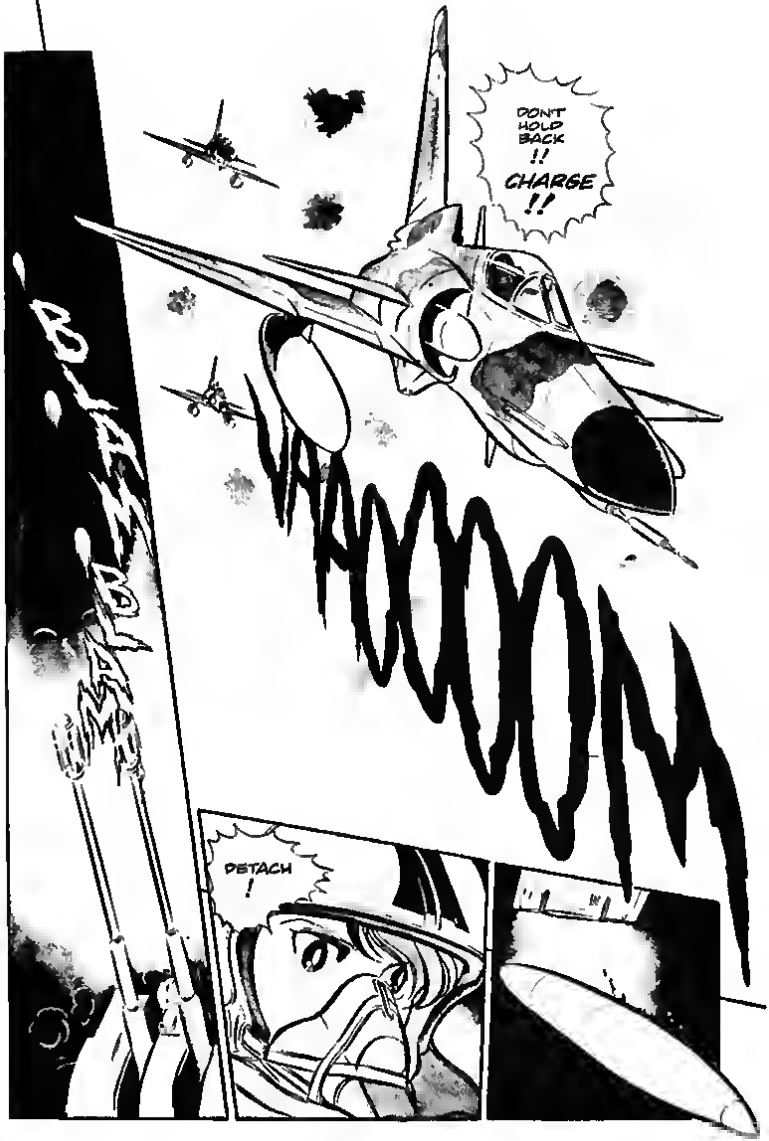
Mission 16:

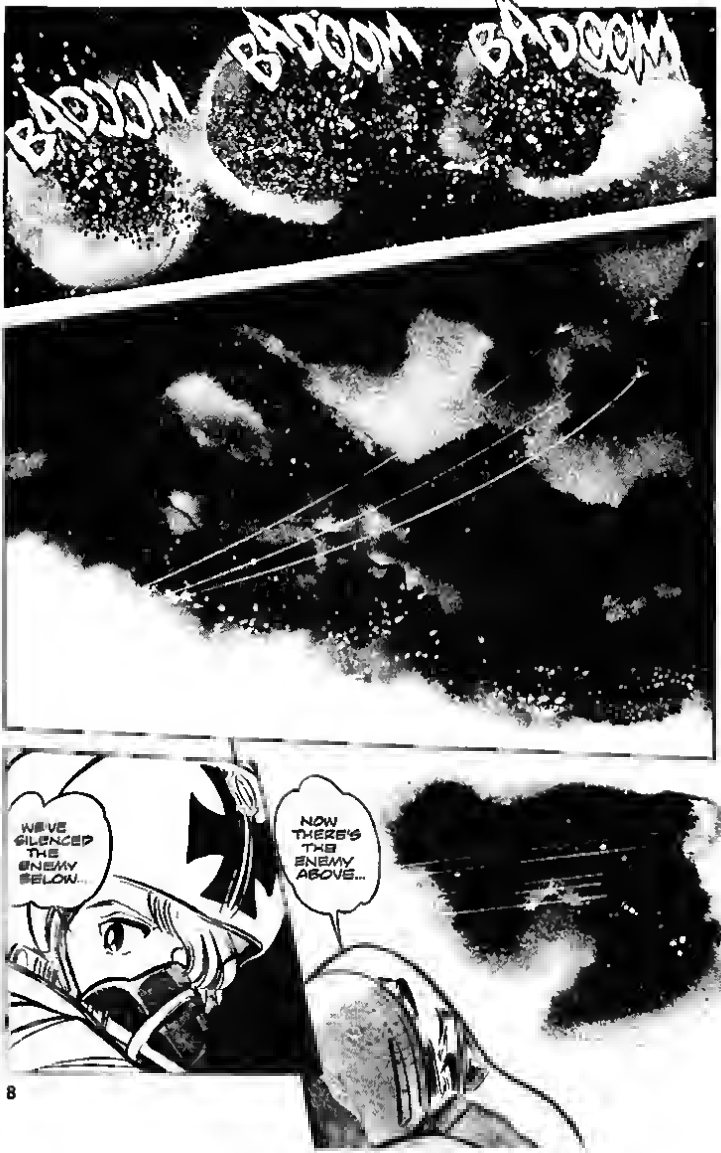
The EXPLOSIVE SKY

I HAD ASSUMED THAT A GENTLEMAN WOULD BE REPRESENTING THE PRESIDENT OF YAMATO AIRLINES, SO I HAD BOOKED THESE RESERVATIONS ACCORDINGLY.
I HAD NOT ANTICIPATED THAT A YOUNG LADY.
IT'S NO PROBLEM, SIR. THE MOULIN ROUGE NIGHT SHOW IS TRULY FIRST CLASS. IT'S WONDERFUL TO BE HERE.
WELL, WE'VE AGREED THEN, THAT YOUR YAMATO AND OUR FRANCAISE AIRLINES CAN JOINTLY USE THE SAME EUROPEAN AIR CORRIDORS. MERCI BEAUCOUP, MADEMOISELLE RYOKO.
AND I THANK YOU, SIR.

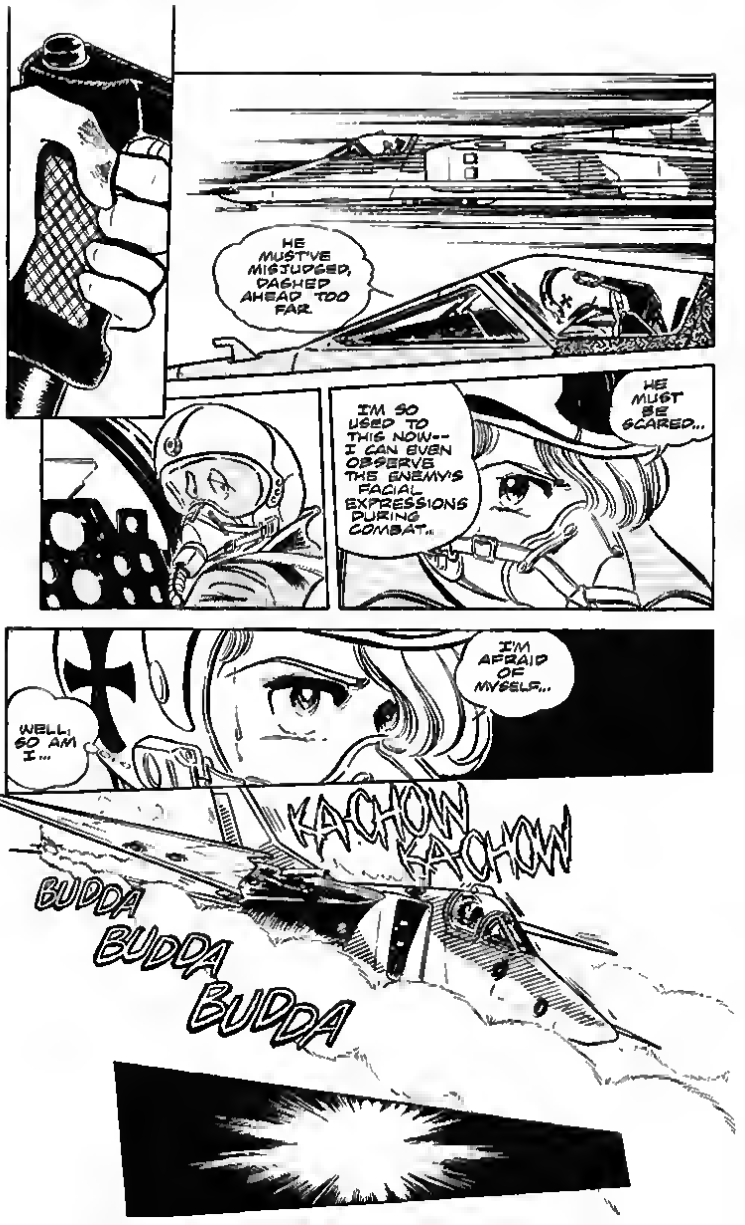
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'LL BE FLYING AROUND THE WORLD AS YOUR FATHER'S REPRESENTATIVE...
I SUPPOSE THIS MUST TAKE YOU AWAY FROM YOUR BOYFRIEND A LOT, EH?
YES.. IT DOES INDEED.
MADEMOISELLE, YOU HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL CALL FROM TOKYO. IT IS FROM A GENTLEMAN NAMED MR KANZAKI...
TELL HIM THAT I'LL SPEAK WITH HIM WHEN I HAVE A REASON TO...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU LOOK A LITTLE PALE...
YES, I'M JUST A LITTLE TIRED..

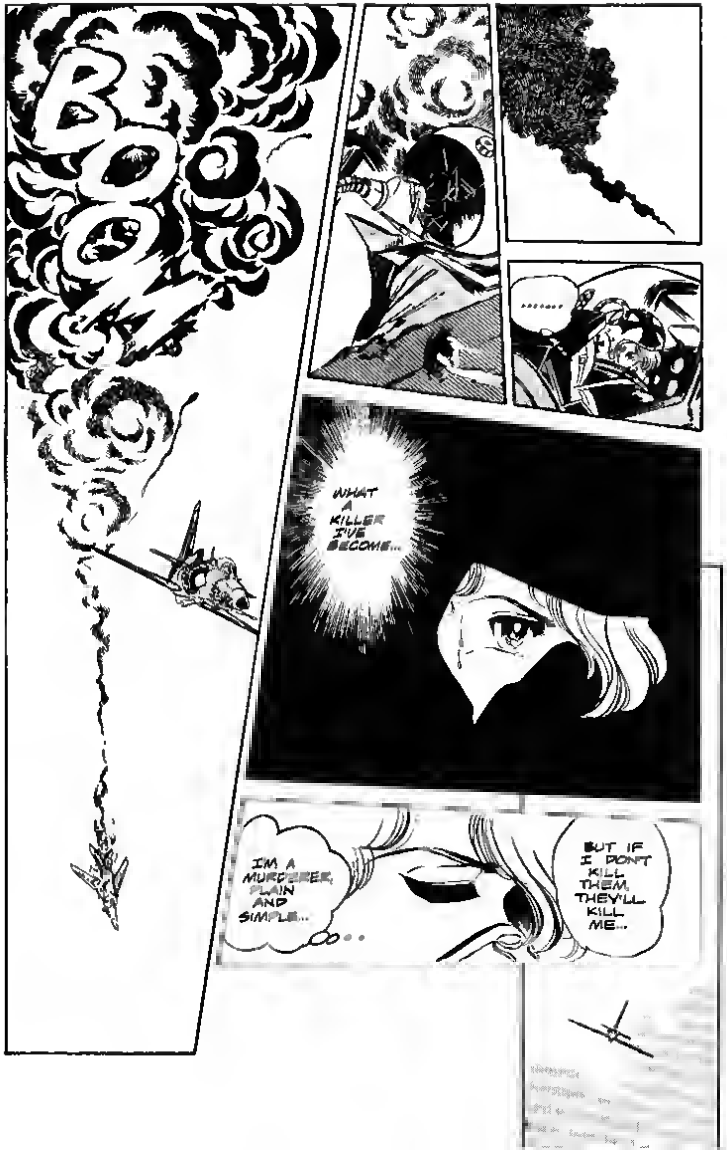
VEER
OOOM
THIS IS SHIN I RECOGNIZE THE TARGET AT SEVEN O'CLOCK! WE'RE MAKING OUR ATTACK-- NOW!
FOLLOW ME!

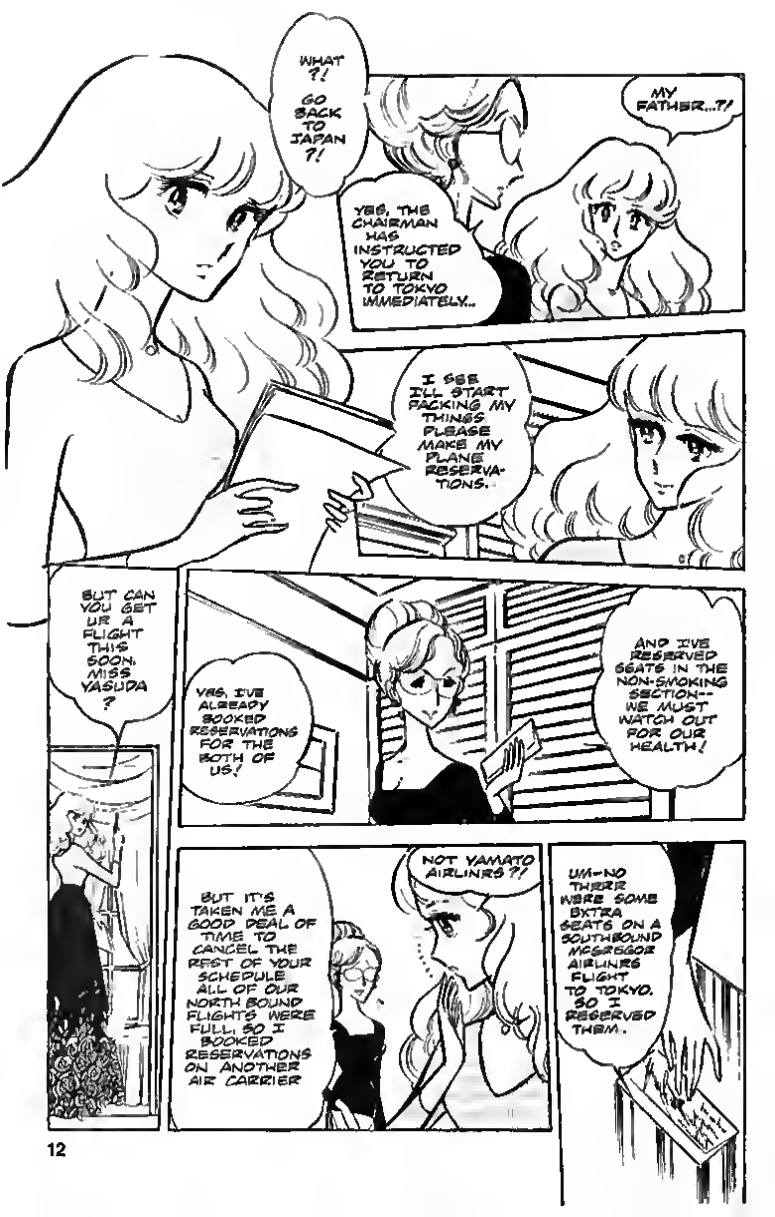

DON'T HOLD BACK !! CHARGE !!
VROOOOM
DETACH !


BADOOM
BADOOM
BADOOM
WE'VE SILENCED THE ENEMY BELOW...
NOW THERE'S THE ENEMY ABOVE...

WAIT TILL THE LAST MOMENT, THEN SHOOT THEM ALL DOWN AT ONCE!
DON'T LET ANY ESCAPE!
I GROW USED TO KILLING...
RYOKO...IT SEEMS THAT I'M FARTHER AWAY FROM YOU EVERY DAY...NOT ONLY IN THE MILES...BUT IN THE MIND, AS WELL...
AS IF THE SMELL OF GUNPOWDER HAS PENETRATED TO MY VERY BONES...
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
UH!!

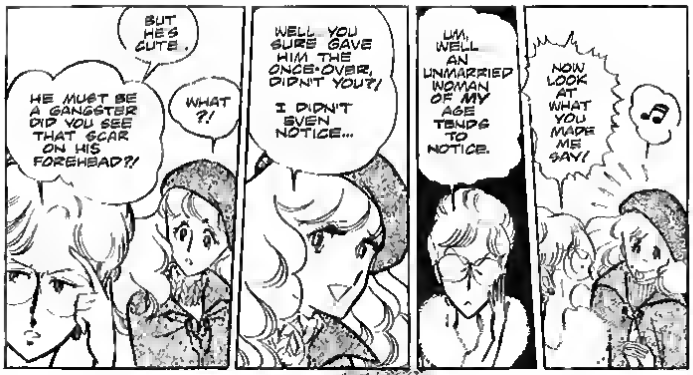

HE MUST'VE MISJUDGED, DASHED AHEAD TOO FAR.
HE MUST BE SCARED...
I'M SO USED TO THIS NOW-- I CAN EVEN OBSERVE THE ENEMY'S FACIAL EXPRESSIONS DURING COMBAT..
I'M AFRAID OF MYSELF...
WELL, SO AM I...
KA-CHOW KA-CHOW
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA


BOOOM
.....
WHAT A KILLER I'VE BECOME...
IM A MURDERER, PLAIN AND SIMPLE...
BUT IF I DON'T KILL THEM, THEY'LL KILL ME...


WHAT?! GO BACK TO JAPAN?!
MY FATHER...?!
YES, THE CHAIRMAN HAS INSTRUCTED YOU TO RETURN TO TOKYO IMMEDIATELY...
I SEE. I'LL START PACKING MY THINGS. PLEASE MAKE MY PLANE RESERVATIONS.
BUT CAN YOU GET US A FLIGHT THIS SOON, MISS YASUDA?
YES, I'VE ALREADY BOOKED RESERVATIONS FOR THE BOTH OF US!
AND I'VE RESERVED SEATS IN THE NON-SMOKING SECTION-- WE MUST WATCH OUT FOR OUR HEALTH!
NOT YAMATO AIRLINES?!
BUT IT'S TAKEN ME A GOOD DEAL OF TIME TO CANCEL THE REST OF YOUR SCHEDULE. ALL OF OUR NORTH BOUND FLIGHTS WERE FULL, SO I BOOKED RESERVATIONS ON ANOTHER AIR CARRIER
UM-NO THERE WERE SOME EXTRA SEATS ON A SOUTHBOUND MESSAGOR AIRLINES FLIGHT TO TOKYO. SO I RESERVED THEM.

THAT'S FINE. THE FACT THAT OUR FLIGHTS ARE FULL IS GOOD FOR OUR AIRLINE...
WHEW!
IT'S NICE TO RIDE WITH ANOTHER COMPANY EVERY NOW AND THEN.
WILL YOU HELP ME PACK ?
OF COURSE
PASSENGERS ON AIR FRANCE FLIGHT 53 TO LONDON, PLEASE PROCEED TO GATE 18 .
I'VE FINISHED WITH CUSTOMS... WHAT'S NEXT...?
THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE IN THE DEPARTURE TIME OF PAN AMERICAN FLIGHT 19 TO SAN FRANCISCO VIA LONDON
ARRIVES 2A
OH !
WHAT LONG BLACK HAIR.

EXCUSEZ-MOI.
NON, PARDONEZ-MOI !
AU REVOIR
.....
MISS TSUGUMO !
DO YOU KNOW HIM ?
WHAT LONG HAIR HE HAS !
NO, IVE NEVER MET HIM BEFORE. HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE FRENCH.
HIS CLOTHES SMELLED OF GUNPOWDER.


BUT HE'S CUTE.
HE MUST BE A GANGSTER DID YOU SEE THAT SCAR ON HIS FOREHEAD?!
WHAT?!
WELL YOU SURE GAVE HIM THE ONCE-OVER, DIDN'T YOU?!
I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE...
UM, WELL AN UNMARRIED WOMAN OF MY AGE TENDS TO NOTICE.
NOW LOOK AT WHAT YOU MADE ME SAY!

BUT I FEEL AS IF I'VE SEEN THOSE SAME EYES BEFORE— THEY REMIND ME OF SOMEONE—
...OF EYES FAMILIAR TO ME...

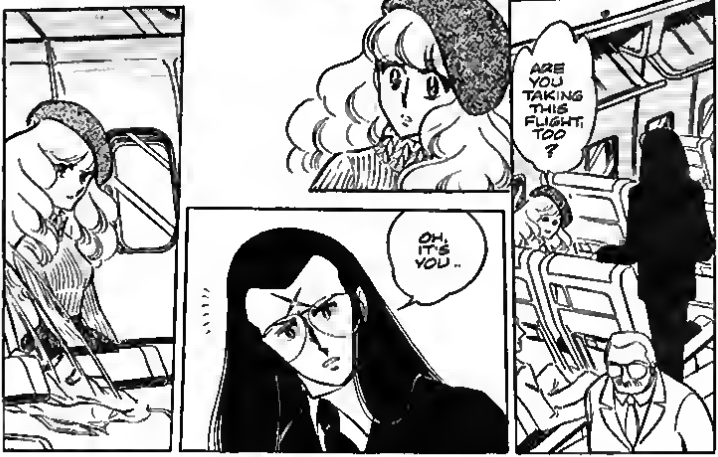
OH—

SHIN!!
HE HAS THE SAME EYES AS SHIN!
YI!!

BUT... MAYBE NOT. I WONDER IF THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO HAVE THE SAME EYES—
YOUR YELLING STARTLED ME, MISS TSUGUMO!

Lufthansa
Lufthansa

SHIN..
WHERE ARE YOU NOW..?
WHY DID YOU DISAPPEAR SO SUDDENLY..?


ARE YOU TAKING THIS FLIGHT TOO ?
OH, IT'S YOU..

SEEMS SO WHERE ARE YOU HEADED ?
TO TOKYO...
HOW ABOUT YOU ?
I'M CHANGING FLIGHTS IN TEL AVIV AND HEADING FOR ASRAN.
ASRAN...
THE WHOLE COUNTRY OF ASRAN IS IN TURMOIL...A CIVIL WAR IS ON! HE A MILITARY MAN? IS THAT WHY HE SMELLS OF GUNPOWDER?
SAKI !!
PRINCE SAKI !!
PRINCE ?!
IS HE A PRINCE ?!
SAKI, DO YOU REMEMBER ME?!
GRAHAM...!
GRAHAM CARSON !

I'M CAPTAIN OF THIS PLANE. WHAT A SHOCK IT WAS WHEN I SAW YOUR NAME ON THE PASSENGER LIST!
NOW IT'S MY TURN TO BE SURPRISED! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU'D BECOME A PILOT!
YOU LOOK FANTASTIC, SAKI!
YOU DON'T LOOK TOO BAD YOURSELF!
BY THE WAY, IS THIS LOVELY LADY YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
WHAT?
OH!
NO... SHE JUST HAPPENS TO BE SEATED NEXT TO ME.
EXCUSE ME, MA'AM!
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT. YOU WERE FAMOUS FOR JUMPING TO HASTY CONCLUSIONS AND LIKING BEAUTIFUL LADIES.
ha, ha, ha... DON'T SAY THAT.
WERE YOU IN PARIS ON HOLIDAY?
NO... BUSINESS.

BUSINESS ?!
DOES A PRINCE HAVE TO WORK?
.....
I'M BUSIER THAN I LOOK.
THAT'S GOOD. SAD THINGS SEEM TO HAPPEN TO A MAN WITH TOO MUCH TIME.
CAPTAIN CARSON! THE CO-PILOT WANTS YOU ON THE FLIGHT DECK..
OKAY, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
WELL, AFTER TAKE-OFF, I'LL SEND A STEWARDESS FOR YOU. PLEASE COME TO THE LOUNGE UP FRONT.
THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT BEFORE YOU GET OFF AT TEL AVIV.
HE'S AN OLD SCHOOL CHUM. I'M SORRY TO HAVE DISTURBED YOU. I HOPE YOU DIDN'T MIND ALL THAT.
NO, I DIDN'T MIND
I WONDER.. IS THERE REALLY SUCH A THING AS A PRINCE WHO SMELLS OF GUNPOWDER..?

LEVEL AT CRUISE ALTITUDE, THREE-THREE THOUSAND.
GOOD!
I'LL BE IN THE LOUNGE. IF SOMETHING HAPPENS, BUZZ ME!
YES, SIR!
CAPTAIN, THE PARIS CONTROL TOWER'S CALLING YOU
WHAT IS IT?
YES, THIS IS CARSON.
WHAT?!
WHERE DID THEY PUT IT?!
WHAT'S WRONG?!

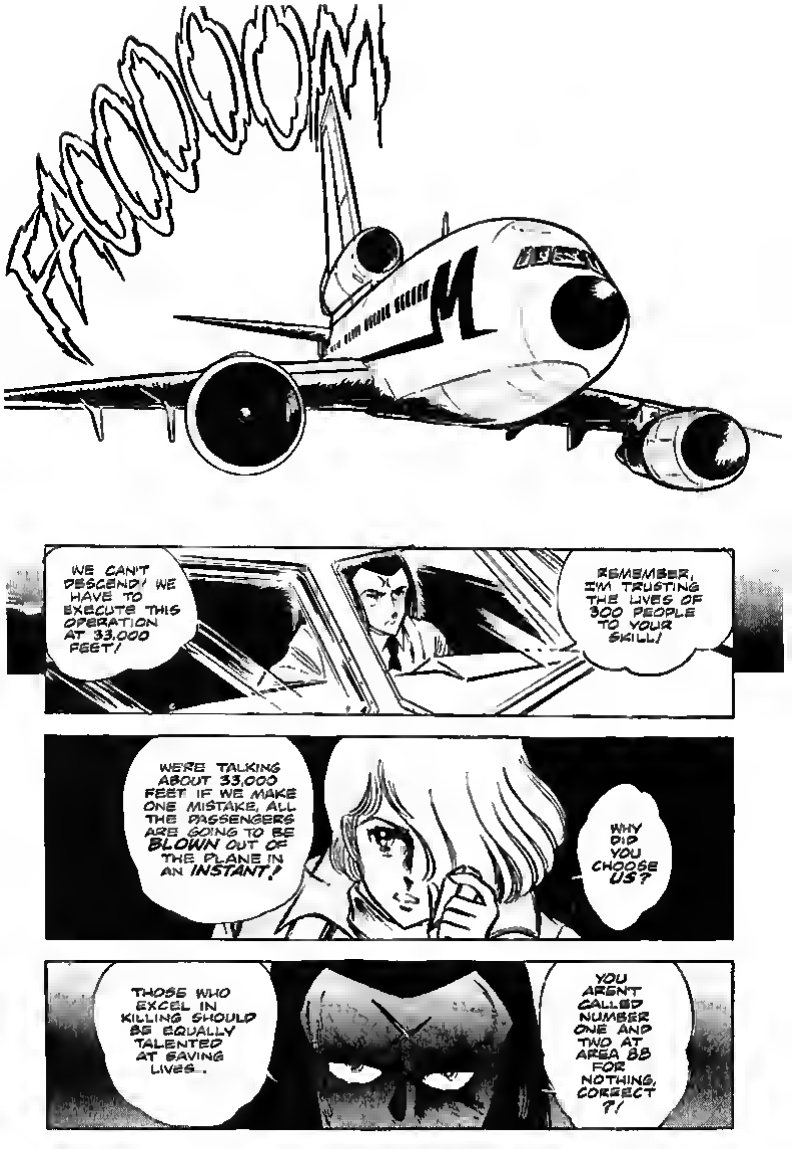
SOMEONE'S PLACED A BOMB ON THIS PLANE!
WH-WHO DID IT ?!
A TERRORIST HE'S ALREADY BEEN CAPTURED BY THE PARIS POLICE.
THEN WE HAVE TO LAND AT MARSEILLES AND LET THE PASSENGERS ESCAPE!
IF WE DESCEND, THE BOMB WILL EXPLODE !
THEY SAID THE DETONATOR IS KEYED TO AN ALTITUDE AIR PRESSURE METER!
WAIT !!
.....
.....
WHAT ?!
THEY SAID AN AUTOMATIC SWITCH ARMS THE FUSE AT 16 000 FEET, AND AT 33,000 FEET A TIMER IS SET
AS IT IS, WE'VE GOT THREE HOURS BEFORE THEY BLOW US ALL TO KINGDOM COME!
THEY'RE AT THE JOINTS OF BOTH WINGS. TWO BOMBS WITH ENOUGH PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE TO BLOW THIS PLANE APART!
IT CAN'T BE TRUE !
WHAT DID THIS TERRORIST DEMAND ?!

TICK
THERE ARE NO DEMANDS! HE JUST WANTED TO KILL ONE OF THE PASSENGERS.
THIS ISN'T A HIJACK... IT'S AN ASSASSINATION PLAN!
TICK
HE WANTS TO BLOW UP THIS PLANE AND ALL ITS PASSENGERS TOGETHER...
JUST FOR A MAN NAMED SAKI!!
TICK!
...AND THAT'S THE WHOLE STORY... DID YOU DO SOMETHING TERRIBLE BACK IN YOUR COUNTRY..?
clink
.....
ANSWER ME! THE LIVES OF ALL THESE PEOPLE DEPEND ON IT!

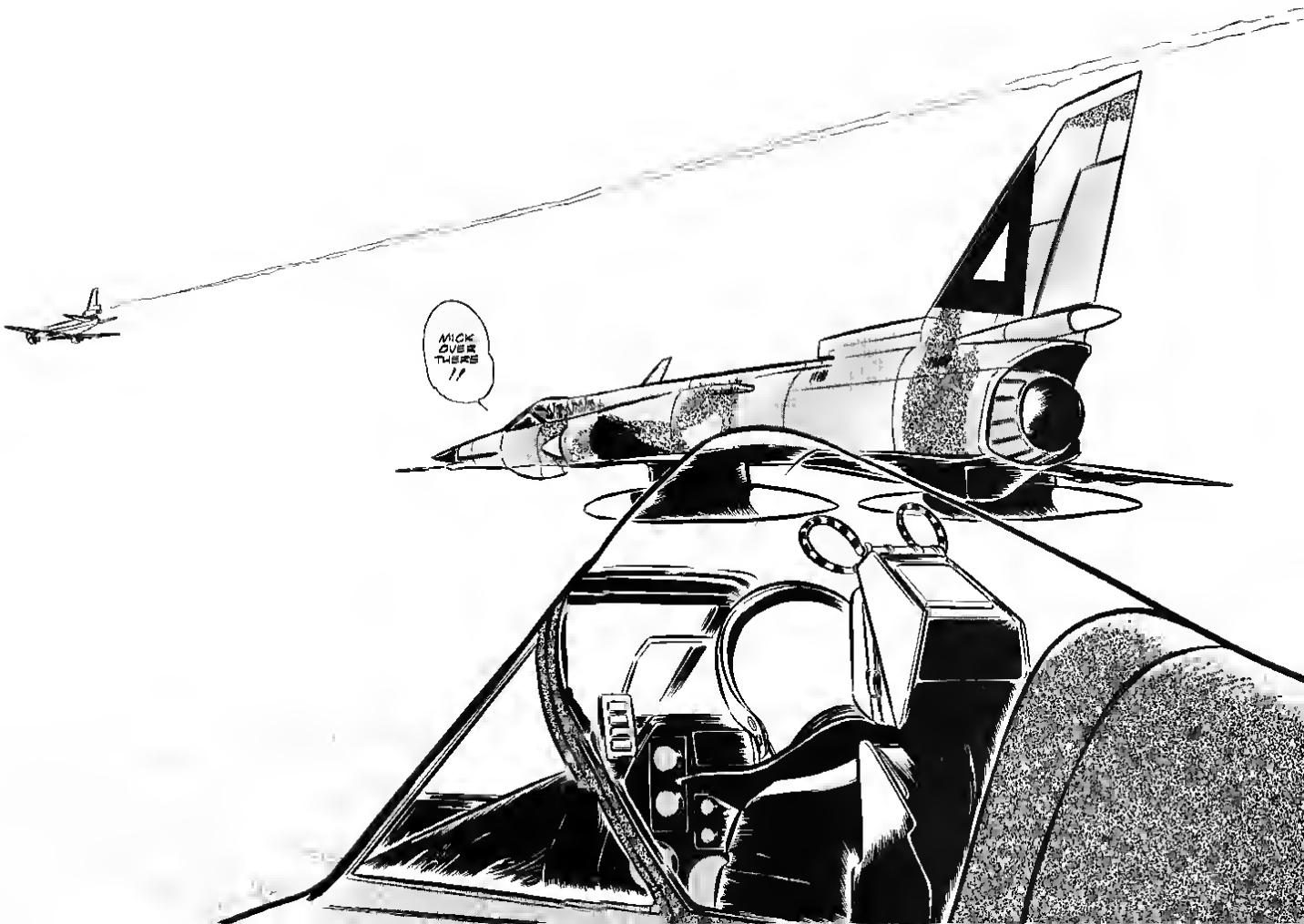
IF YOU THROW ME OFF THIS PLANE, IS THE TERRORIST GOING TO DEFUSE THE BOMBS?
IF WE DESCEND TO A LOWER ALTITUDE, THEY'LL EXPLODE!
IF WE MAINTAIN OUR ALTITUDE, THEY'LL EXPLODE IN THREE HOURS!
NO..IT CAN'T BE STOPPED..HE JUST WANTED TO DESTROY THIS PLANE. IT'S THE EASIEST FORM OF TERRORISM...
THERE'S NO HOPE AT ALL!
YOU STILL HAVEN'T ANSWERED ME!
WHO THE HELL IS TRYING TO KILL YOU?!
WELL, I CAN THINK OF ONE MAN WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE ME DEAD..
WHO'S THAT?!
MY FATHER!
W-WHAT?!
IN THE ASRAN CIVIL WAR, MY FATHER, ABDABL VASHUTABL, IS THE LEADER OF THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT FORCES!
HIS DEPUTY IS MY BROTHER RISHAR!

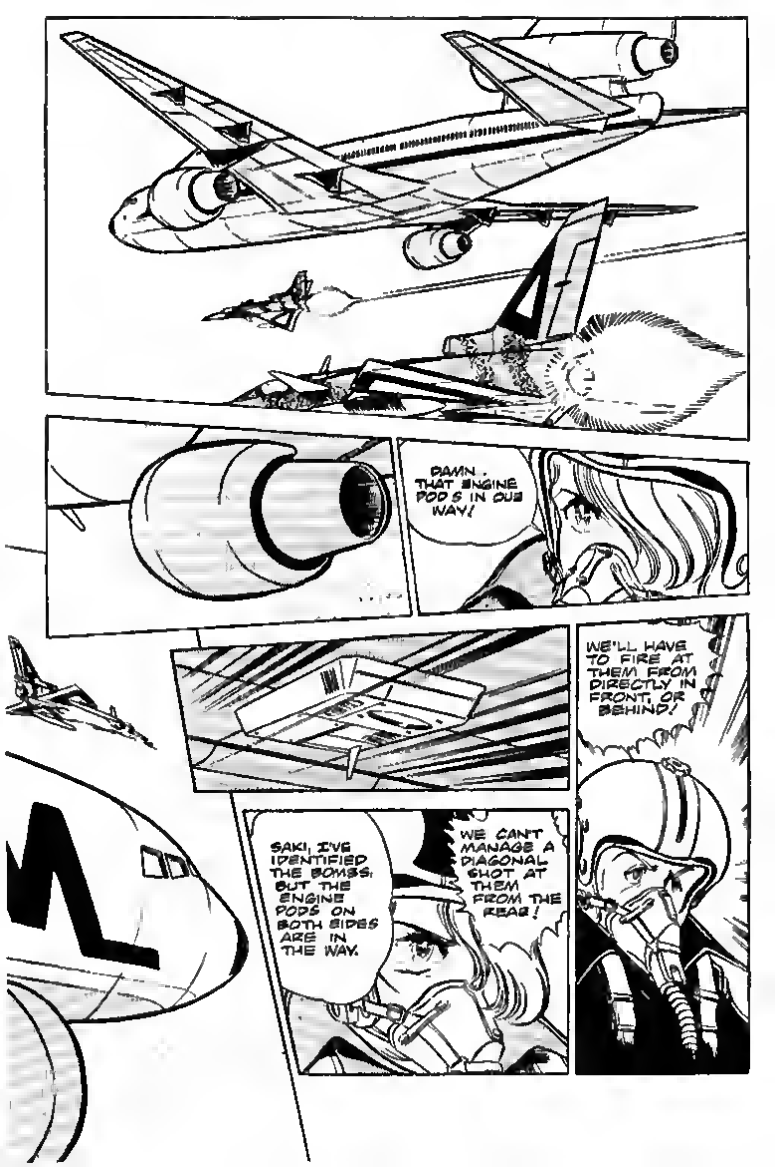
GROUND CREW!
MY FUEL PRESSURE IS TOO LOW! THE ENGINE MIGHT FLAME-OUT ON TAKE-OFF!
SORRY, THERE ARE NO SPARES FOR THE BOOST PUMPS!
DAMN! WHAT KIND OF SHIT IS THIS?!
THEY'RE TRYING TO REBUILD SOME, OVER IN THE SHOP, BUT THEY HAVEN'T HAD MUCH LUCK YET...
THEIR EFFORT TO MAKE UP FOR BAD PARTS WITH THEIR OWN SKILL HAS REACHED IT'S LIMIT.
WE'RE IN TROUBLE! THE SUPPLY ROUTE FOR SPARES HAS BEEN CUT...
THE GROUND TROOPS MADE A STUPID MISTAKE, AND NOW WE CAN'T GET SUPPLIES FROM MOROCCO TO TRIPOLI!
WE'VE BEEN LUCKY THAT THE ENEMY'S BEEN LEAVING US ALONE IF THEY ATTACKED US NOW, WE'D ALL BE DEAD!
MAN! HASN'T SAKI COME BACK FROM PARIS YET?!
HE SHOULD BE BACK TODAY.
DIDN'T SAKI GO TO PARIS TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT AN AIR SUPPLY ROUTE FROM FRANCE?

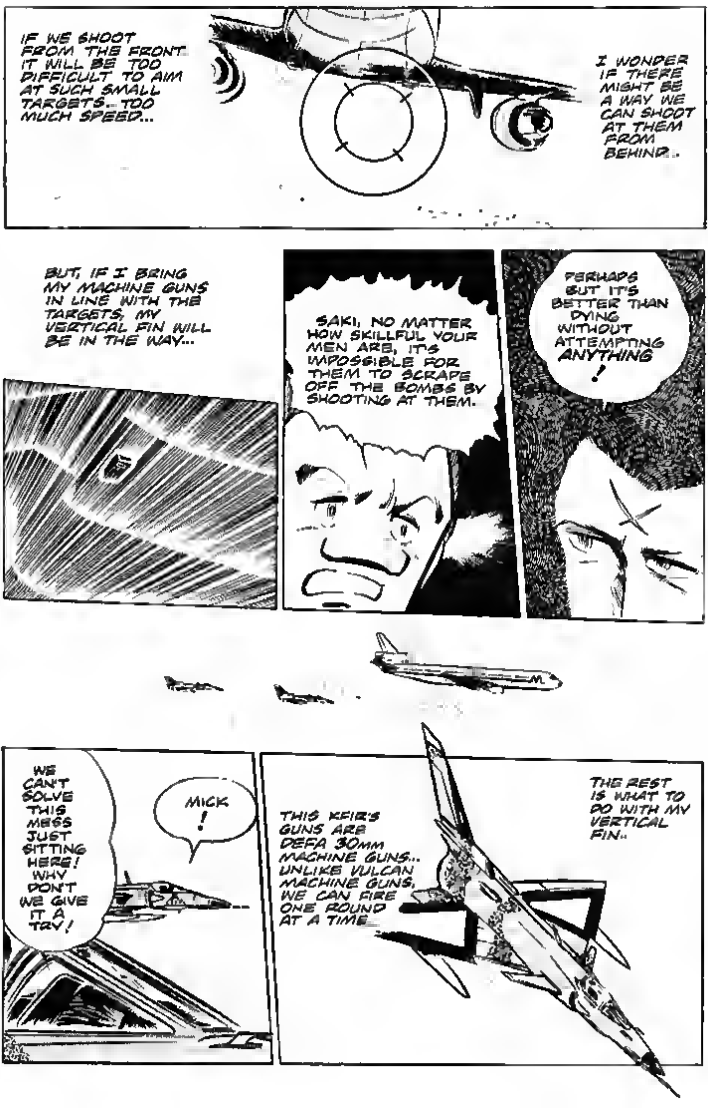
YEAH, AND IF HE WAS SUCCESSFUL, OUR PARTS WILL BE DELIVERED NEXT WEEK. THEN EVERYTHING WILL BE BACK TO NORMAL!
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO BE PATIENT TILL THEN.
YEAH, WELL... I JUST HOPE HE GETS BACK SOON.
SHIN, MICK... COME TO THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER!
IT'S FROM SAKI! A MESSAGE OVER A COMMERCIAL FLIGHT FREQUENCY!
FROM SAKI...? WHAT'S THIS ?!
WHAT KIND OF EXPLOSIVES ARE THEY ?!
SINCE THEY DIDN'T FIND THEM WHEN THEY CHECKED THE PLANES WEIGHT, THEY MUST BE PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES.
DAMN... WHAT THE HELL IS THIS ?!
TWO HOURS...
THE TERRORIST SET THE BOMBS AT THE WINGROOTS !
THEY'RE GOING TO GO OFF IN TWO HOURS !


KABOOOM
WE CAN'T DESCEND! WE HAVE TO EXECUTE THIS OPERATION AT 33,000 FEET!
REMEMBER, I'M TRUSTING THE LIVES OF 300 PEOPLE TO YOUR SKILL!
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT 33,000 FEET IF WE MAKE ONE MISTAKE, ALL THE PASSENGERS ARE GOING TO BE BLOWN OUT OF THE PLANE IN AN INSTANT!
WHY DID YOU CHOOSE US?
THOSE WHO EXCEL IN KILLING SHOULD BE EQUALLY TALENTED AT SAVING LIVES..
YOU AREN'T CALLED NUMBER ONE AND TWO AT AREA 88 FOR NOTHING, CORRECT?!

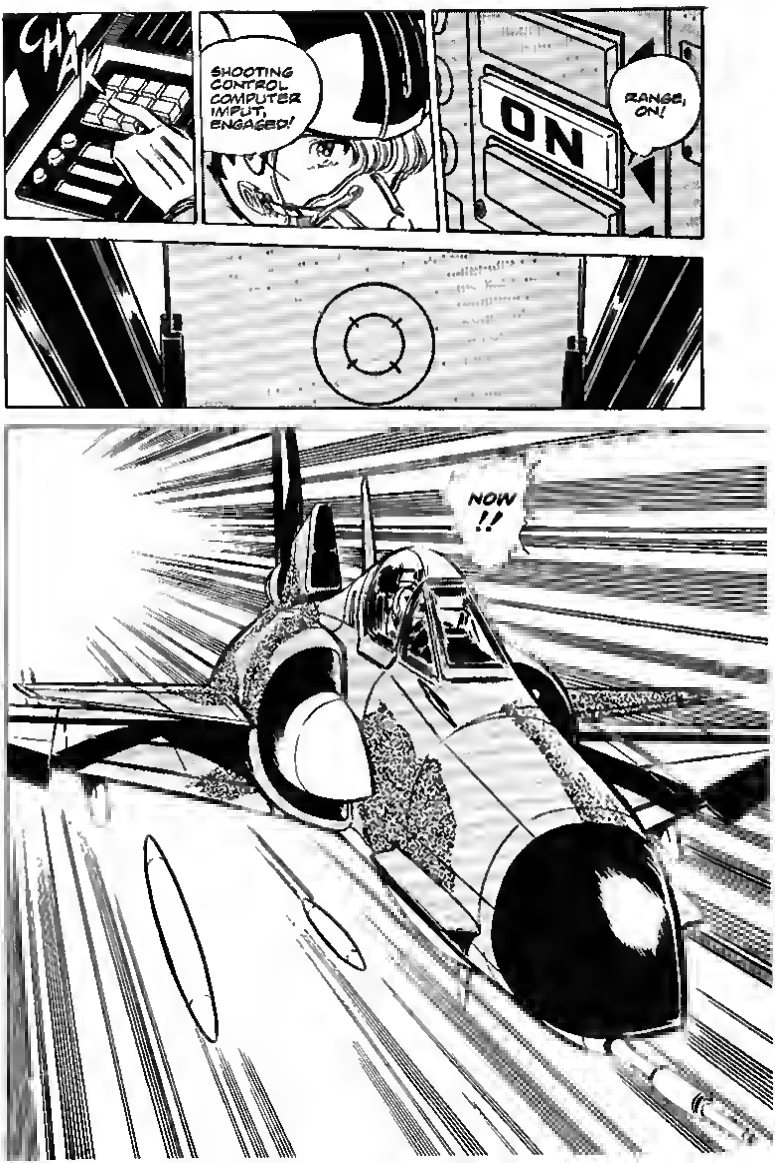
THE RENDEZVOUS POINT IS EL22C. BE THERE IN THIRTY MINUTES!
GOOD LUCK!
SAKI.. YOU ARE..
THIS IS WHAT I AM. LIEUTENANT COLONEL OF THE ASRAN KINGDOM AIR FORCE, COMMANDER OF MERCENARIES IN AN OPERATIONAL ZONE CALLED AREA 88...
I'M THE ONE WHO IS CAUSING THE MOST DAMAGE TO THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT FORCES...
THE MAN WHO IS FIGHTING A BLOODY WAR AGAINST HIS OWN FATHER.
SHAAAAAAAA
SAKI... I HAD NO IDEA.


MICK OVER THERE !!


DAMN. THAT ENGINE POD'S IN OUR WAY!
WE'LL HAVE TO FIRE AT THEM FROM DIRECTLY IN FRONT, OR BEHIND!
SAKI, I'VE IDENTIFIED THE BOMBS, BUT THE ENGINE PODS ON BOTH SIDES ARE IN THE WAY.
WE CAN'T MANAGE A DIAGONAL SHOT AT THEM FROM THE REAR!

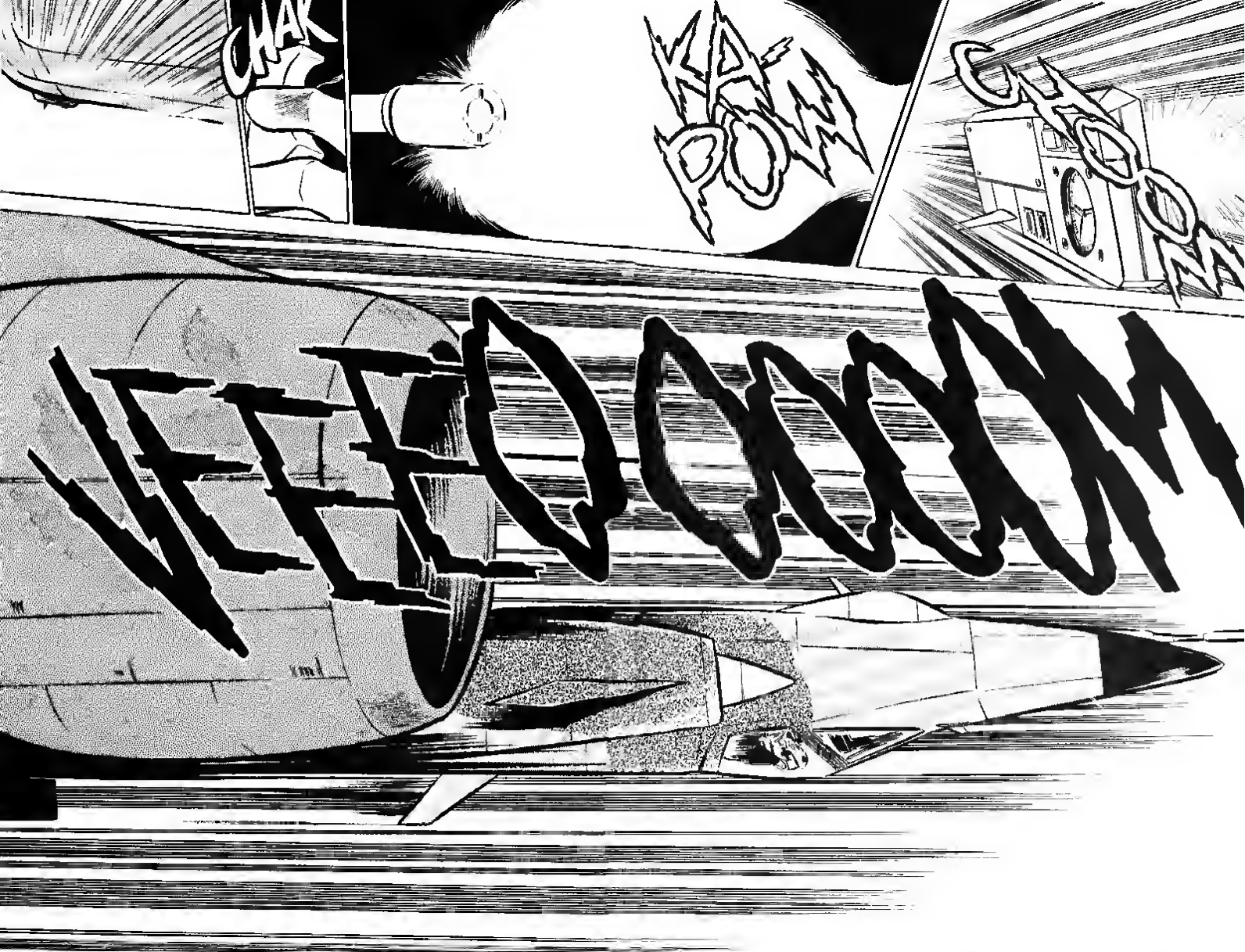

IF WE SHOOT FROM THE FRONT IT WILL BE TOO DIFFICULT TO AIM AT SUCH SMALL TARGETS.. TOO MUCH SPEED...
I WONDER IF THERE MIGHT BE A WAY WE CAN SHOOT AT THEM FROM BEHIND..
BUT, IF I BRING MY MACHINE GUNS IN LINE WITH THE TARGETS, MY VERTICAL FIN WILL BE IN THE WAY...
SAKI, NO MATTER HOW SKILLFUL YOUR MEN ARE, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO SCRAPE OFF THE BOMBS BY SHOOTING AT THEM.
PERHAPS BUT IT'S BETTER THAN DYING WITHOUT ATTEMPTING ANYTHING !
WE CAN'T SOLVE THIS MESS JUST SITTING HERE! WHY DON'T WE GIVE IT A TRY!
MICK !
THIS KEIR'S GUNS ARE DEFA 30MM MACHINE GUNS.. UNLIKE VULCAN MACHINE GUNS, WE CAN FIRE ONE ROUND AT A TIME.
THE REST IS WHAT TO DO WITH MY VERTICAL FIN..

I'VE GOT IT...
WE JUST HAVE TO FLY UPSIDE DOWN!
MICK, YOU TAKE THE RIGHT ONE, I'LL TAKE THE LEFT!
LET'S GO!
BRAAK
THIS KFIR HAS DELTA WINGS AND STABILIZING FINS NEXT TO THE AIR INLETS.. IT'S FAR MORE STABLE THAN OTHER DELTA WING PLANES..
THERE'S NO DANGER OF LOSING SPEED WHILE FLYING INVERTED.


CHAK
SHOOTING CONTROL COMPUTER IMPUT, ENGAGED!
ON
RANGE, ON!
NOW !!

TICK
TICK
TICK
VOOO

WWUT-T WWUT-T
THEY'RE COMING! CARBON, LOCK UP THE CONTROL COLUMN-- TIGHTLY!
W-WHAT'S THAT SOUND?!
STEWAEDESS, WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
WWUT-T
.....


CHAK
KA-POW
GLOOM
VROOOM

GOD... I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE!
WE DID IT!
WE GOT THEM BOTH!
BOTH OF YOU WERE EXCELLENT! YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE!
Y-YEAH...
NOW... WE CAN HEAD FOR TEL AVIV, RIGHT...?
SHEEEN
BADOOM
BADOOM

SAK!... I'M GOING TO BE GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT ALL HAPPENED BECAUSE OF ME...
IF I CAN DO ANYTHING FOR YOU, PLEASE LET ME KNOW
CAN YOU KILL PEOPLE ?!
.....
THEN, FORGET IT...
RIGHT NOW, I JUST NEED PILOTS WHO CAN KILL.
TAKE CARE.

TO BE CONTINUED.